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# THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

A MONTHLY  
MUSICAL JOURNAL FOR  
USERS OF PIANO-PLAYERS AND  
ALL MUSIC LOVERS.

EDITED BY  
**ERNEST NEWMAN.**

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Vol. II. No. 16. January, 1914.



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# The Piano-Player Review

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## EDITORIAL.

THE able critic of the "Yorkshire Observer," whose writing always makes interesting reading, has been troubled in soul of late over some of the latest developments in mechanical music, and still more over the future possibilities of it. He quotes the description of the mechanical violin that appeared in a recent number of this "Review," and goes on thus:—"If the violin, *à fortiori* every other instrument of the orchestra. Only the other day Strauss, out of pity for the men of brass whom he had set to blow a reverberating blast in his 'Festive Prelude,' recommended them to save their breath and use an aerophor—some sort of artificial inflator. Why not assemble all the instruments, couple them up with hammers, rubber-bands, and aerophores, actuate them with a perforated roll, and dismiss the superfluous sixty or eighty or a hundred performers?"

Why not, indeed, if it were possible? So long as we could get our music of the same fine quality, what would it matter how it was produced? Seriously, does it very much matter in art *how* an effect is made so long as it *is* made, and so long as it is the right effect? In music in particular, are we not always fancying we hear certain differences between this performance and that, whereas the truth is that we only see them? Musicians in general, and musical critics in particular, are fond of enlarging upon the differences between this man's playing of the violin or the pianoforte and that man's. I sometimes wonder whether, if we had to hear all our music from behind a screen and in the darkness, and in total ignorance of the name of the performer, we could "spot" the right performer in more than one or two cases out of ten. I am not sure, even, that we should always be able to distinguish between the men of the first rank and the men of the second. In the concert-room, if John Jones plays the pianoforte badly, he gets the full



dis-credit of his bad playing, because John Jones carries no halo about with him to dazzle us as we look at him and listen to him. But if Paderewski plays badly it probably never sounds quite as bad as it really is—as bad, say, as the same playing would sound in the case of John Jones—because Paderewski always has his halo with him; that is to say, some of the badness of his performance would be covered up for us by a sort of unconscious incredulity on our part. Any regular concert-goer who will submit his sensations to a rigorous scrutiny will, I think, discover numberless instances in which the sensations of the ear have been confused or overlaid by the sensations of the eye.

Take, as throwing a little light on the question, the matter of the aerophor to which the critic of the "Yorkshire Observer" refers. The aerophor is a contrivance for getting the same amount of tone out of a wind instrument with a less expenditure of breath, thus enabling a tuba player, for instance, to hold on to a note for an almost indefinite time. Now let us suppose that the inventor of the apparatus had kept the knowledge of it simply to himself and Strauss, and that the aerophor had been used in the "Festive Prelude" the other night without anyone in the audience knowing about it. Would a single soul have been a penny the worse? We should merely have heard a number of long-sustained notes in the brass, for which the music would have sounded much better than when the notes have to be momentarily dropped and then taken up again. What earthly harm would this "machine" have done us? Would it not, indeed, have done us all a certain service? And would any deadly injury have been done us if a similar device had been attached, without our knowing it, to every instrument of the orchestra? Is not the objection to the aerophor simply another instance of the illegitimate interference of knowledge with pure sensation? I used to know a drummer who got an admirable effect in that one of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in which the

very faintest of drum rolls produces an almost imperceptible throb like that of a great liner. (The Variation is the one containing the quotation from Mendelssohn's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" overture.) The drummer I have mentioned used to discard his drum sticks at this point, and tap lightly and rapidly on the edge of the parchment with a couple of pennies. If the conservatives or the purists were to tell us solemnly that a drum ought to be played with its proper sticks, and that to get a new effect by means of pennies was opening the door to no end of "mechanical devices" in drum music, we should all laugh at them. Why should we not be equally amused when purists hold up their hands in horror at the notion of a tuba player taking advantage of the aerophor to make his breath go a hundred times as far as it normally would? We might as reasonably object to the scientific shaping of the mouthpiece or the curving of the bell of the trumpet or the horn in order to increase the natural resonance of a vibrating tube of metal. Once more, so long as the effect is got, and it is a good effect, an effect that carries its own justification with it, what in the name of reason does it matter how it is got, by an old means or a new one? Surely even the oldest of the means we now employ must have been new some time or other.

I do not think any of us will live to see an orchestral concert of the kind so ruefully foreshadowed by the writer in the "Yorkshire Observer." But I do think that it would be easy to attach a resonator to any orchestral instrument that would enormously increase the power of it whenever desired. The future solution of the problem of the large orchestra may be along these lines. If ten violins could be made, by means of resonators, to give as much sound as thirty, we should obviously save the expense of the other twenty players. A device of this kind was actually tried at Queen's Hall a few years ago. I do not know why it was abandoned: perhaps it did not quite work satisfactorily. But the

principle is sound enough, and some day, I feel sure, it will be translated into practice. After all, if the aerophor, that economises the breath and so prolongs the tone of a tuba, or a resonator that increases the tone of a stringed instrument, is a "machine," what is the mute but a "machine" for diminishing the tone and altering the quality of it? By all means let us get the best music it is possible to get; but let us not imagine that we shall improve matters by walking in the mists of illusion and sneering at this device or that device for being mechanical, when every device that is already employed in any instrument whatever is mechanical. What is the cunning key apparatus of the flute, for example, but a calling in of mechanism to compensate for the natural disabilities of the human fingers?

\* \* \* \* \*

In last month's issue of the "Piano-Player Review" it was suggested that a Piano-Player Competition might well be included in the programme of some future Competition Festival. Copies of the number were sent to prominent people in the musical world, especially the Musical Competition world, and their opinion upon the proposal was sought. So far only a few replies have reached us. It may be that our friends are a little shy of expressing an opinion upon a new thing of this kind, and still more of being even distantly associated with "mechanical instruments"; or perhaps they are pondering deeply upon the subject, and we shall have the pleasure of printing their words of wisdom next month.

The secretary of one of the largest Competition Festivals writes thus: "Thank you for your letter *re* Piano-Player Competition. It would be a delightful variant, but who is going to supply our competitors with the necessary piano-players? They are hardly in a position to pay for pianos, let alone piano-players. Even your humble servant does



not feel justified in paying the necessary price. It is as much as he can afford to provide a Broadwood upright for his struggling family. Have you any alternative method to propose?

This is really touching; but may I assure our friend that the case for the Piano-Player Competition is not so hopeless as he seems to think? If I had suggested the inclusion of a contralto solo class in his festival, and he had turned round to me with the pathetic remark, "But it isn't every girl who has a contralto voice; some girls haven't even voices at all," I should have taken him gently by the hand and pointed out that his committee, being men of commanding intelligence, would see at a glance that the contralto solo competition was not intended for the girls who hadn't contralto voices, but for the girls who had. Similarly I do not suggest a Piano-Player Competition for people who haven't piano-players, but for people who have. Strange as it may seem to Competition Festival secretaries, there really is a large number of these instruments in the country—many thousands of them, perhaps. Of course, their proprietors are not likely to take up their piano-players and walk to the Competition Festival unless and until they are invited to do so. Even the gay adventurous fox, yearning for a good day's sport, does not walk into the kennels and implore the dogs to hunt him. He politely waits until an invitation reaches him. If the Festival Committees wish to see what sport the owners of piano-players can give them, they must really invite them to come out into the open.

Mr. Harry Evans, the well-known adjudicator, writes: "I am very sorry that up to now I know nothing of the piano-player, so that any opinion of mine would be of no value. But some of my amateur musical friends here are very keen on it, and I am going to make myself acquainted with its evident virtues immediately."

Mr. Landon Ronald knows his own mind on the subject, and has no hesitation in expressing it: "I have read with great interest your suggestion with regard to the inclusion of a Piano-playing Competition in the scheme of some future Competitive Festival, and I write to tell you that I heartily agree with what seems to me an admirable idea.

"I am keen on all these mechanical instruments, because by personal experience I can vouch that they spread the knowledge and love of good music. Where I think a competition of the kind you suggest would be so beneficial is the fact that the prize would be awarded to the competitor interpreting the test-piece with the greatest amount of musical understanding. This would ensure many young people who would not take the trouble to learn the music before running it through on the piano-player having to study with some intelligent interest the composition in question.

"As you justly say, if the great list of artists you quote have thought it good enough to give their praise to the piano-player, it surely should not be beneath the dignity of those who go in for Competitive Festivals to devote some time to this quite remarkable modern invention."

The proposal was made the subject of an interesting and outspoken leading article in the "Manchester Guardian," which we reprint here:—

"THE PIANOLA AS MUSICAL EDUCATOR.—Mr. Ernest Newman is a musical critic to whom it is both a sport and a religion to shock our sentimentalities in the cause of truth. His latest profanity has been to suggest to the management of the Midland Musical Competition Festival that they might do worse than introduce a player-piano competition to the Festival. He thinks that inexperienced youth would even be better employed, from a musical point of view, in adventures among classical works by means of the piano-player than in toiling through the technical difficulties of

comparatively worthless sonatinas, and that with [the mechanical part of the performance taken for the most part out of their hands they would be able to devote their minds more completely to what is really artistic. But Mr. Newman, in his editorial notes in the 'Piano-Player Review' this month, says he finds these suggestions only meet with disfavour. It may well be asked, Why? Surely we are right in regarding the Competitive Festivals more as educational than as festive occasions? Is it not going a long way, and indeed going too far, to say that a means of training the ear in such a comprehensive way as is afforded by the use of the piano-player is of no educational value? We accept all sorts of educational means that are unideal in some features. We have methods of solfeggio, nonsense rhythms, and Dalcroze's romps. And what is it that the ear of the student needs? Simply experience. Is it not mere sentimental foolishness to refuse to utilise the rich supply of experience which the piano-player can give? Again, are we so certainly justified in giving that preference to the human hand as a mechanical means which we have hitherto accorded it? Is it not true that while the pianist is toilsomely training his hands to acquire control of touch the pianoforte-maker is racking his brains to take the control of tone qualities more and more completely out of the hands of the player? Are not the mechanical production of tone and an analysis of mechanical tone effects a most direct means of arriving at a just method of tone criticism? Let us above all things remember how much the art of music already owes to mechanism. We shall not then turn lightly from any further means it can afford of testing and increasing our impressions and our experiences."

The idea also commends itself to Mr. J. A. Rodgers, the musical critic of the "Sheffield Telegraph," and an adjudicator at the recent Blackpool Festival. He writes thus in the issue of his paper of the 19th December :—



“Mr. Ernest Newman has raised in his smart little monthly, ‘The Piano-Player Review,’ a question of some importance to the managers of Competition Festivals. He proposes classes for mechanical piano-player performers. He takes the ground that as all the competitors would start equal in the matter of technique, the test to which they would have to submit themselves would be wholly an artistic one, a test of their understanding of the music they were playing, and of their capacity to feel it and reproduce it in a personal way.

“Mr. Newman might have added that it would serve the end aimed at in all the better sort of competitions—to lead the competitors into the study of good models and the analysis of masterpieces. Set a competitor, say, the first movement of the Waldstein Sonata as a test piece, and there would be furnished not merely scope for the exercise of feeling, imagination, and other interpretative qualities, but also a resultant uplifting of taste, and an enlightened judgment which always follows a careful study of the best in any art. The danger of the piano-player is the defect of its quality—labour saving. A competition would promote concentration and work in place of superficial and promiscuous amusement.”

So far, then, the position is this : all the people who know anything about the piano-player are in favour of making it the subject of a test at some Competition Festival.

E. N.

**REITERATION.****I.**

THE tragic collapse of Mr. Ernst Denhof's operatic enterprise in Manchester, followed by Mr. Beecham's extremely sporting action in taking over the concern and seeing it through at considerable financial loss, has raised much discussion in musical circles and in the press upon the old question of how opera on the grand scale in this country can be made to pay. It seems to me that the use of the Piano-Player has a very direct bearing upon that question.

Of course the thing is deplorable. It fills one with feelings akin to despair to observe the stolid indifference of our public to such a magnificent undertaking as this. A week or two ago in the King's Theatre in Edinburgh there was only one thing that tempered one's intense enjoyment of these glorious performances, and that was the depressing reflection that this, as far as one could see, must be the last time—that there was no grain of encouragement, except the keen enthusiasm of the audience, to tempt Mr. Beecham or any one else to repeat the experiment. This was a notable undertaking indeed—grand opera on a worthy and dignified scale and with, all things considered, a perfectly wonderful repertoire, presented in succession in six or seven of our principal cities. I suppose it took "Tristan" something like forty years to reach Edinburgh, and then only in a garbled form. Mr. Beecham brought us "Rosenkavalier," in a complete and admirable form, in less than three. We were given a second opportunity of hearing "Elektra," and, besides a long list of Wagner works, two other operas that were new to most of us—"Pelleas and Melisande" and the "Magic Flute": and it will be pretty generally admitted that there is a wide range there—were presented. It was all, in a word, almost too good to be true. I am afraid it was quite too good to be true another time. One was

inclined to cry aloud in revolt: Why can't we have this every year? The answer is very simple. Because the public will not come. And why is that? I want to make an attempt to answer that question.

A good deal of nonsense was talked in this controversy about the high prices, which were blamed for keeping people away. One knows very well that the prices were not at all too high—that the thing certainly cannot be done any cheaper, and that if there was any real demand for it that would not stand in the way for a moment. The cheaper parts of the house, too, on most occasions, were no better filled than the dress-circle. It comes to this: that people do not very much want to hear “Elektra,” “Rosenkavalier,” and “Pelleas.” The average man has found that this sort of thing does not appeal to him, that it rather bewilders him, that he can't understand it very well. And he concludes that the root of the matter is not in him. He wants an entertainment that will entertain, and will make no special demands upon him. And really I think it is not to be wondered at. There must have been not a few among these audiences who were very much at sea. You would probably find one not very far away from you, who has left his office a good deal earlier than usual, after a scramble and a rush at the last moment, dined hastily and dressed in a hurry, and arrived just as the lights are going down. He buys a book of words to “try and find out what the thing is about,” and then finds the lights are too low for him to read it: if he has an opportunity in an interval he will, perhaps, question his neighbour distractedly about the plot. He can't hear the words on the stage. For, although it is all very well to give opera in English and to insist on careful enunciation, the practical upshot of the matter is that one never does hear the words—or never hears enough of them to be of much help. The music is, of course, entirely new to him. And before the evening is over he finds himself looking on in a state



of the most helpless confusion, wondering what in the world Elektra is doing grubbing in the ground, or why in the world Goland is in bed in the second act. And if he is so far adrift as that—and he often is—about the incidents of the drama, what is his state and frame of mind in regard to the music, which is so far removed from any music that he has ever heard before? He concludes that this is not for him. He “can stand” an orchestral concert, he reflects, but these fellows Strauss and Debussy are a bit beyond him.

Is not that a fair statement of the case? And can grand opera be expected to pay when a large proportion of the audience approach it in this frame of mind and under these conditions? The reason why Strauss’ and Debussy’s works are not appealing to their audiences is not to be found in the works themselves. What they have to say is worth the hearing, and these audiences would, without any doubt, find it so, if they could hear it. But, as it is, “Elektra” and “Pelleas” are simply missing the mark. They are not reaching their destination. What my friend in the dress-circle saw and heard was not “Elektra” as it really is—and he has no right to judge it till he does see it as it is—but “Elektra” as it appeared to him, from an immense distance and through a fog. That is really a depressing reflection, of fine effort thrown away—of a great gun missing fire, if you will allow the expression. If only, one reflects, all this could *penetrate*, how splendid it would be! What a grand enthusiastic public we should have: how managers would prosper!

It may be said that I am putting the intelligence of the audience too low, that music-drama is not a vast and baffling problem, and that if it does not appeal directly it has failed. I hasten to add that there are hundreds of people in each of these audiences, with a vastly keener musical perception than my own, who can at a first hearing, and with no previous knowledge, appreciate and understand. But to be quite

honest, there are, I am convinced, hundreds of the other sort. If only there were enough of those gifted souls who can come at once into close communion with the work in hand, all would be well. But there are not enough—there are never enough. The rest of the theatre must be filled with the other sort: it is upon them ultimately that success or failure depends. It is they who really matter in this discussion.

Let us get back to the average man, interested in music, but mightily busy with other things, who gives up grand opera as beyond him. I still believe that he is rather in the same position as if he went to a performance of "Charley's Aunt" in the Russian tongue. That would be apt to bore him. I am not sure that "Elektra" does not bore him for much the same reason. But if the play had been translated he would have spent a joyous and delightful evening. For it would have reached him then.

For "Elektra" is complicated, elaborate, requiring to be disentangled to some extent. At a first hearing it seethes and rages and howls in many places, without clear articulation, without definite outline. It is dubbed a monstrosity—as the *Ring* was: as everything new always was—a sort of chaotic horror.—"Oh, I can't make head or tail of that!"

And yet it is so easy. To be able to follow it closely and intelligently, to reduce it to an almost pellucid straightforwardness, it only demands one thing: namely, to look into it a little, to come to a more intimate understanding with it. It is a poor thing to give it up all at once; for there is one quite infallible specific. To hear it again. And then again. But that is exactly where the deadlock in our operatic matters comes in. You cannot hear it again, because Heaven only knows when it will be given again. It is a perfect vicious circle. You cannot understand it without

hearing it again, and as you didn't like it you won't pay to hear it again, and therefore it won't be given again.

Reiteration is the one cure for the misunderstanding of modern opera. It is a perfectly safe cure in most cases. Opera has always stumbled and failed for the want of it. And now at last it has been made possible. For the way has been opened up by the Piano-Player.

BERTRAM SMITH.

*(To be continued.)*



## ON "PLAYER" ACCOMPANIMENTS.

AN event of some significance in the history of the Piano-Player movement took place at Wolverhampton on November 12th last, when Miss Chatterly Ingram gave a song recital at which the whole of the accompaniments to fourteen songs, the pianoforte part to the first movement of César Franck's violin sonata, and the accompaniments to two violin solos were played by Mr. Harry Ellingham on a Pianola Grand Pianoforte. So far as the writer's knowledge goes this is the first time the Player has figured in public as an accompanist, to the displacement of the finger species in that rôle.

That the occasion was not one of mere advertisement or notoriety seeking is clear from the fact that nowhere on the platform or upon the programmes was the name of the instrument obtrusively shown; and except that the changing of the rolls from time to time drew attention to the mechanics of the "machine," the majority of the large audience must have been under the impression that they were listening to the accompaniments played with the usual finger control. Probably few of the 600 persons present realised the import of the performance. To them the interest of the concert was in the music, particularly in the songs and the singer, and, to a less extent, in the violinist.

The accompaniment to many, if not most concert-goers, merely supplies a background to the voice or solo instrument of which they are scarcely conscious unless something serious happens to disturb the relative values. This attitude was the correct one so far as the old style of song was concerned, but with the modern song the pianoforte part is much more than a mere accompaniment to the voice, its subtle complexities of rhythm and harmony being used to create an atmosphere from which the vocal part emerges as the central,

but by no means the most important, feature of the work. It follows as a matter of course, that the playing of the pianoforte score of a Strauss, Wolf or Marx song (to mention only three of the greatest song writers), needs much more technique, much more musicianship, and much more temperament on the part of the pianist, than has hitherto been demanded of him in this domain. In fact the art of "accompanying" has been elevated from its former humble position (in which the pianist was expected only to be able to follow alertly the vocalist's whim, and to do it with the production of the least possible amount of tone), to its present dignified rank, where it stands side by side in importance with the singer.

To place the Piano-Player, the "Machine," the "Box of tricks," in the position to challenge comparison with our great accompanists was an act of temerity from which most pro-player enthusiasts would shrink. They would say: "It is all very well to use the Player in a performance of a pianoforte concerto with the Queen's Hall or some other first-class orchestra; on such an occasion the choice of concerto would be everything, and of course a specially cut roll would be used, no money being spared on its editing. Also it is all very well to use the Player for the accompaniment of certain songs." But knowing the weaknesses of the Player, the erratic nature of the motor, for instance, with its liability to "jib" or to "race," the limitations of the accenting devices, the difficulty of attaining such extremely sensitive control as is necessary for song-recital work, to say nothing of the poor editing of the rolls, they would not unnaturally hesitate to submit the Player to such an exacting test as this. It was with some feeling of uncertainty as to the result that the writer attended the concert, but with no bias either for or against the intrusion of the Player into this branch of art.

The programme was as follows:—

- |                |                                    |   |                     |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Songs.      | (a) Ständchen .. .. .              | } | <i>Brahms</i>       |
|                | (b) Liebestreu .. .. .             |   |                     |
|                | (c) Sappische Ode .. .. .          |   |                     |
|                | (d) Meine Liebe ist grün .. .. .   |   |                     |
| 2. Violin.     | Sonata in A (1st movement) .. ..   |   | <i>César Franck</i> |
| 3. Songs.      | (a) Valse de Chopin .. .. .        | } | <i>Marx</i>         |
|                | (b) Vergessen .. .. .              |   |                     |
|                | (c) Ständchen .. .. .              |   |                     |
|                | (d) Heimliche Aufforderung .. .. . |   |                     |
| 4. Songs.      | (a) La Captive .. .. .             |   | <i>Berlioz</i>      |
|                | (b) Amour! viens aider .. .. .     |   | <i>Saint-Saëns</i>  |
| 5. Violin Solo | (a) Cavatina .. .. .               |   | <i>Raff</i>         |
|                | (b) Melodie .. .. .                |   | <i>Tschaikowsky</i> |
| 6. Songs.      | (a) Blackbird's Song .. .. .       |   | <i>Cyril Scott</i>  |
|                | (b) Deserted .. .. .               |   | <i>MacDowell</i>    |
|                | (c) Lament of Isis .. .. .         | } | <i>Bantoek</i>      |
|                | (d) Song of the Genie .. .. .      |   |                     |

From this it will be seen that the range of songs chosen was very extensive, and the choice of them was a great compliment to the Recitalist's musical taste, intelligence, and vocal skill. We are not here concerned with the singing. It must suffice to remark that Miss Ingram has a beautiful voice, and that her talents were, for the most part, quite equal to the demands the music made upon them.

Our concern is with the "Player." Was it up to the requirements of the music? If not, where did it fail? And is it possible with the present instruments to rectify any defects that may have been apparent?

First of all it must be remarked that Mr. Ellingham's control of the instrument was as nearly perfect as possible; so thorough was his knowledge of the songs, and so carefully rehearsed were they, that he was entirely with the singer from beginning to end. One could find no fault at all with the "ensemble." Those who have had experience of accompanying with the "Player" will understand what that means.

Satisfactory as the performance was for the most part, one felt in some of the songs that the tone was on the small side.



This is undoubtedly accounted for in part by the fact that the piano was a small Grand (the "Player" is not as a rule built into the full-sized Grand), and the hall was much too large for a small instrument to be heard to the best effect. Again, the "toning" of the piano (by this is meant the softening of the felt on the hammers to reduce a hard metallic tone to one of a soft velvety nature) was probably overdone; but apart from these causes it appeared in certain places, where more and more volume of tone was required, that Mr. Ellingham was keeping it down unduly, obviously from the fear of smothering the voice.

Much of the individuality in the playing of great accompanists is attained by accenting certain notes in a chord, or varying a phrase here and there in the inner parts of the music. This accenting is accomplished with the "Player" mechanism automatically by means of one of the accenting devices. Here, it seems to the writer, is the great limitation of the "Player," not only as a means of accompaniment, but also as a solo instrument, compared with the finger pianist. By no means at present known is it possible with the player to hold up a phrase or a note momentarily, or to hurry it on, in one part of the music while leaving the other parts unaffected. How far the effect may be produced in the rolls it is impossible to say in the present careless conduct of that industry; but it may be remarked that once in the roll it is there for ever, and cannot be varied according to the mood of the moment. In Brahms's "Liebestreu" one felt there was much to be desired in the playing of the left-hand part. Here, where the melody is repeated again and again in an impressive manner, the "Player" performance was far from convincing, the impressive phrase being rattled over much in the way one says "How do you do?" to an acquaintance instead of with the air of gravity essential to the music.

The "Player" cannot be said to be quite effective in this

piece. Of the other Brahms songs the "Sappische Ode" was, perhaps, most satisfactory, although it was delightful to hear the difficult technicalities of "Meine Liebe ist Grün" so cleanly done.

Of the Marx songs the playing of the "Valse de Chopin" was particularly good, while Strauss's "Ständchen," the accompaniment to which needs extremely delicate handling, was undoubtedly the gem of the evening. In "Heimliche Aufforderung" the lack of sufficient tone was very noticeable. One need say no more of the two French songs than that the accompaniment was quite adequate.

In the Bantock songs, especially "The Song of the Genie," one realised gratefully that the full tone of the instrument was being used.

Unfortunately the writer did not hear the performance of the César Franck sonata, but of the last two violin solos the Tschaikowsky item was much the best.

In conclusion, then, it may be stated that the "Player" is a very satisfactory means of accompaniment. The control is so delicate that a perfect ensemble is attainable provided it is operated by a musician with a thorough understanding of the music, and that the work has been sufficiently rehearsed.

The singer or instrumentalist need have no qualms about the ability of the "Player" to enter into the spirit of an individual rendering by slackening or increasing the speed as may be desired, or varying the quality and quantity of tone according to the requirements of the soloist.

Something is to be desired in the matter of tone.

This impression may have been due to the causes already mentioned (smallness of the instrument, and excessive softening of the hammer felt), but, in any case, the fault can be remedied by the employment of a full-sized concert-grand pianoforte (carefully "toned") and a cabinet player.

The serious limitations of the "Player" as an accompanist are of two kinds :—

1. In the employment of more than one pressure at a time.
2. In the employment of more than one speed at a time.

As regards the first, the accenting devices now in use are capable of giving two or even three different pressures at the same moment ; but even these (it is a moot point as to how many different pressures an expert pianist can consciously control at any given moment) do not satisfy the artistic temperament which requires an accent on one note to-day and on quite a different one to-morrow.

Again, regarding the second kind of limitation, although it is possible to get almost any variation in tempo affecting the whole of the parts, it is not possible, as has already been pointed out, to vary the speed of one part whilst leaving the other parts unaffected. And since this is an essential feature of tempo rubato playing (the variations are, of course, never great, and may be excessively slight, just sufficient to give the music a flavour), it follows that the highest artistic playing is not really attainable on the players in use to-day. This must not be taken to mean that artistic interpretations of pianoforte solos and song and instrumental accompaniments are impossible. The Recital at Wolverhampton conclusively proved that as a means of accompaniment the "Player" is quite efficient, for some pieces quite excellent indeed, far surpassing the second-rate human pianist, and only just falling short of the very highest artistic attainments.

The limitations here pointed out are perhaps only apparent to a select few ; it may even be said that their effects on the playing exist only in the minds of the people who hear them. That is a very comfortable reflection for those who have ears but do not hear. We who have moderately efficient



organs of corti prefer to rely upon evidence supplied by our superior aural apparatus. Whatever may be said upon this point, it is very certain that the value of the "Player" as a means of accompanying has been proved up to the hilt by this Recital. It now only remains for the roll-cutting firms to get along with their part of the work, for up to the present the libraries have been shockingly supplied with song accompaniments.

A. W. W.

## TANGOS FOR THE PIANO-PLAYER.

THE tango at present is nothing but a popular dance. It is passing through a craze, and—like all such things under such conditions—it will soon come to the end of its tether.

The music of the dance, however, is a different case. Tango-music as yet is not a separate entity. We still regard it as something appertaining to the actual occasion of the dance itself. The genuine tango has not made its way into artistic music in the way the waltz has or the polka (polonaise). Perhaps it never may; but it does not seem likely that so much music of the same class and spirit can be created and used day after day without affording in the end a certain artistic permanency.

The music-publishers' catalogues show us that hundreds upon hundreds of tangos have been written within the past two years. Probably nine-tenths of these are the merest imitative pot-boilers. If so, they will soon remove themselves. But the remaining tenth are the real thing. These genuine pieces contain the spirit that brought them and the dance they illustrate into being. They are a part of the world of art—a humble part, no doubt, and perhaps one that cannot develop to any great extent, yet with all reservations still a definite part. They are therefore not likely to disappear, but to remain for use in the various ways common to all light, straightforward, characteristic pieces of music.

The piano-player will be the chief means of keeping tango-music alive. The prevailing demand for tango rolls is enormous. The perforated-music factories have been hard put-to for months to keep the supply up to the demand, the Christmas rush in particular taxing their resources to the uttermost. Performers will continue to retain favourite compositions long after the actual craze has died out, and perhaps to provide a field for the further creative activities

of musicians in this direction. And pianola-players, conveniently placed as they are for observing the music independently of the dance, are the best judges of what is most entirely artistic (using that word in its sense of "non-utilitarian") in the world of the tango. Therefore the piano-player will also be the chief means of converting tango-music into sane and solid music absolute.

Tango-music is generally of very simple structure, and a player-pianist in sympathy with it could play it fairly well without special study. But in so far as tango-music has a distinct character of its own, we gain considerably by an endeavour to understand what that character is. The special features of the music to be discussed here are: first, its construction (bass, inner accompaniment, and melody); secondly, its form; and thirdly, its spirit. The writer has not considered it necessary to avoid the use of musical terms in the course of his remarks.

The bass of a tango is generally of very simple nature, consisting of a note on the first beat of a bar preceded by a short note on the last part of the bar preceding. *El Choclo*, for example, maintains this bass throughout, except for an occasional omission of the short note.

A number of good tangos, however, have a more elaborated bass. The movement in *Los Invisibles*, *El Gallito* and *De Pura Cepa* is considerably broken up, but still without utterly destroying the tango-formation of the lowermost part.

It would seem that such a square movement as that which opens the dance *Max Linder* is not true tango.

The following tangos have the normal bass: *Quasi Nada*, *Armenonville*, *La Sucursal*, *El Tolero*, *La Payada*, *El Caburé*, *Mi Regalona*, *Independencia*, *De Primera*, *El Compinche*, *Tocalo mas fuerte*, and *Venus*.

The inner material of the accompaniment is equally



simple, for in the most characteristic cases it consists of no more than two chords, of the rhythm—



of which the second note comes in the exact centre of the bar. Very frequently the short unaccented note of the bass merges with a third chord in the accompaniment, in which cases the movement of the inner material becomes—



It is important to note that the effect of this accompaniment is to create a sense of buoyancy in the music.

A slight full accent must be given to the second chord.

The sustaining-pedal needs to be held from the accented bass-note which opens a bar to the unaccented bass-note at the end of the same bar, for the actual *tone* of a tango must always be full, though not of necessity loud.

The tango occasionally drops its lilting—



movement in favour of a more sustained and emphatic—



though this happens but rarely, and then only for detached bars. A lovely rocking effect is brought about in bar 6 and bar 12 of *El Choclo* by means of this device. *La Payada* also is touched by the same spirit. In *El Caburé*, on the contrary, it gives rise to a curiously powerful cadence.

In some respects, the most characteristic feature of the primitive tango is the accented chord which comes upon the second half of the cadential bar which concludes a strain (or phrase) of the music. The beauty and effect of this chord lies in its emphasising of the sentence-rhythm of the music.

It is probable that (whatever variety had marked their intermediate movements) the original dancers reached periodically a set figure, and that this more or less massive

chord represents the firm unity which held them together at those periodical moments.

As is explained below, the genuine tango is as regular in its form as a C.M. hymn tune ; and so with the aid of these cadential chords the player-pianist could make himself quite familiar with the fundamental principles of musical form.

It was remarked above that the double-chords of cadential-bars are vitally characteristic of the tango. The statement requires a slight modification. Probably no real tango is without this rich emphasis somewhere or other along its course ; but it is by no means essential that it should occur at every cadence. Sometimes (as in *El Choclo*) the first cadence is a subsidence on to a soft chord ; at others (as in *De Primera, Independencia, Mi Regalona*, etc.), it consists of the ordinary chord on the first beat, followed by the run or figure in the bass common to American step-dances and the like. It seems pretty evident, however, that the tango absolute calls for the arresting force of a second big chord upon the weak beat of its strongest bars.

An important minor feature of the tango is the accent that falls upon alternate bars. Ordinary duple rhythm represents the classical "weak-strong" poetical accentuation (shown by an orchestral conductor in his "up-down" beats), and an ordinary phrase or sentence in music ends invariably upon the "strong" accent. The tango moves along in 8- or 16-bar phrases, of which the *odd* bars are of strong accentuation and the *even* of weak.

The most powerful accents of the tango-phrase falls upon the cadence (generally enforced by the heavy chord which, as remarked above, comes with such characteristic effect in the middle of the concluding bar). In counting up the bars, this cadence should fall upon count "1," not upon count "8," for reasons too elaborate to be entered upon here,

but which will be clear to readers who understand that the strong *beats* in music are those numbered odd.

In the vast majority of cases the dance commences on the 2nd bar of the phrase. It opens, therefore, on an unaccented bar, and the music—as it were *gliding* into existence—reaches its first firm beat with the second bass-note. The following tangos commence in this half-seductive fashion:—*Quasi Nadi, Los Invisibles, El Gallito, Armenonville, El Choclo, La Sucursal, El Tolero, Mi Regalona, Independencia, De Primera, El Compinche, Tocalo mas fuerte, De Pura Cepa, Venus*, and the massive *Max Linder*.

In the above, the performer should count as from the numeral “2” in order to bring the strong concluding bar of the sentence upon the count “1.” He must cause the music to swell up to “3” as a wave swells to its crest.

A few tangos commence straightway upon the strong 3rd bar of the phrase. Others (such as *La Payada* and *El Caburé*) commence accentually upon the 3rd bar, but use up a fragment of the 2nd bar for an initial turn in the melody.

No tangos commence upon the strong 1st bar of a phrase.

The performer who is in doubt as to the order of the bars in a tango may make use of a very simple rule:—Regard the first chord of the music as representing the weak 2nd bar, and play with careful counting up to the cadence. If the first of the cadential chords comes upon count “1,” you have the right accentuation. If it comes upon count “8” (or count “16”), you have the wrong accentuation, in which case you may take it that the first chord of the tango represents the strong 3rd bar of the phrase.

Once you have brought the sentence-cadence compactly upon count “1,” you may be sure of the alternation of weak and strong bars for the remainder of the piece; for it seems characteristic of the tango never to vary this accentual rise and fall, even when the sentences are arbitrarily lengthened or shortened.



An arresting effect is the accent which falls upon bars " 5 " and " 13 " of every sentence—upon bar " 5 " always, and upon bar " 13 " generally.

The form of the tango is the most primitive of all. It is at base the simple ternary, *i.e.*, the form which presents : (a) a first section ; (b) a second section ; and (c) the first section again.

*Quasi Nada* shows the tango in its elementary state. This dance consists (a) of a 16-bar phrase, repeated ; (b) of a second 16-bar phrase, also repeated ; and (c) of section (a) as before.

*Los Invisibles* contains a slight development, for the section (a) here consists of : (1) a 16-bar phrase ; (2) a second 16-bar phrase, repeated ; (3) the first 16-bar phrase as before.

So far as the present writer has observed, the third section is never elaborated or extended, but sent out note for note as in the first. The curiously elusive charm of tango-music probably arises from this monotony.

Other tangos, as noted below, fall into a four-sentence structure (a, b, c, d) or into a free repetition of the original three sentences.

There are two main types of tango, the one slow and more or less massive in tone (*andante moderato*), the other quick and spirited (*allegro animato*). Each type, of course, sub-divides into various minor types, and there are not a few tangos which refuse to associate themselves with either ; but in the main the above statement is correct.

I offer here a carefully graded course of study for the reader who wishes to take in hand with as little delay as possible a fairly comprehensive group of these dance pieces. For artistic reasons, I commence with a normal *andante* tango and proceed towards the *andante pesante*, and then return to the original piece for a progression towards the opposite pole, where lies the *allegro brillante* tango, best represented in Bevilacqua's *Venus* or Barbosa's *De Primera*.

The reader who wishes to reach the latter first has merely to reverse the order in which the selected works are set out for study.

*Sequi que te Asienta* might be called an *andante quieto*. Its bass is the genuine tango bass, as is its accompaniment. Its melody is clear-cut and well syncopated (*i.e.*, provided with cross accents). Its form is good, but a little unusual; therefore for this reason (and also for the further reason that there is a lack of enterprise about the middle section) it should not be put into a permanent tango repertory, but regarded merely as an *étude* for the art of playing the tango. (Failing *Sequi que te Asienta*, the preliminary work could be done with *Mi Regalona*.)

The first piece to work at for its own sake may be Alberico Spatola's *La Sucursal*. This is really a beautiful piece of music. It could be labelled *andante poco serio*. It consists of four 16-bar sentences, of which the 1st, 3rd and 4th are repeated upon themselves. (The fourth, of course, is the same as the first.) In the 3rd sentence is a touch of genuine tango passion, but the dominant note of the piece is subdued. Indeed, in certain moods *La Sucursal* seems almost plaintive, as do so many tangos set out in a minor tonality.

The tentative sadness of *La Sucursal* becomes a definite characteristic of Villoldo's *El Choclo*, the second tango you may study for musical reasons. If we gave this piece an Italian term of expression, it would be *andante con dolore*. Its form is very simple—merely four 16-bar sentences, the last a repetition of the first.

*El Choclo* leads the way to the big *andantes* of tango music, of which a representative trio may be made by Juan Maglio's *Armenonville*, Carlos Posadas' *El Tolero*, and Roberto Firpo's *De Pura Cepa*.

*Armenonville* (a rich-toned *andante con amore*) has a considerably varied bass, but the characteristic tango

movement is never far to seek. Its form is a little extended :—(a) 16 bars, repeated ; (b) 16 bars ; (c) 16 bars, repeated ; (d) the same as (b) ; and (e) the same as (a). *Armenonville* offers scope for the artist at the piano-player.

*De Pura Cepa* is an *andante poco grandiose*. If one is not exactly in the mood for it, this tango seems a trifle dull and heavy ; but it is not so really : whatever fault is to be found with it lies mainly in the form, which is a trifle cumbersome (=a, b, c ; a, b, c ; a). The reader may therefore pass this over at will, and concentrate upon *El Tolero*.

*El Tolero* is probably as big an *andante* as is to be found among tangos. It is immensely solid, and full of an athletic dignity. You cannot hurry the playing of it, nor yet can you retard it. When once the piano-player is set going at a good tempo, the matter seems to be taken out of your hands.

*El Tolero* stands at a far remove from *Venus* and *De Primera*, yet there is such breadth and vitality in the “ tango ” as a work of musical art that no one would mistake either type to be anything but representative of the dance.

The form of *El Tolero* is=a, b, a ; c ; a, b, a—the section (c) being merely a 16-bar sentence placed before the repeat of the first part (a) of the piece.

The line of *andantes* is therefore covered sufficiently for the present purpose by *La Sucursal*, *El Choclo*, *Armenonville*, and *El Tolero*. The move from *La Sucursal* to the brilliant *Venus* may be initiated with P. Nicolín's “ tango de pulsación ” *Tocalo mas fuerte*, a well-contrasted piece, tuneful, and delicately graceful.

De Bassi's *El Caburé* (the names of half these tangos irresistibly suggest cigars of fine quality) is an *allegretto poco animato*. Its middle sections are of irregular length, but the form is fairly clear.



Bevilacqua's *Independencia* (an *allegretto animato*) is bright and sparkling, and moves upon a very buoyant rhythm.

Maglio's *Quasi Nada* also belongs to this type of tango ; but the best example for study is the much finer *La Payada* of L. Roncollo. The latter is of simple form, and is touched with the mad abandon of the rapid tango.

The two *allegro* pieces fit to stand beside the *andante* *El Tolero* are (as already mentioned) Barbosa's *De Primera* and Bevilacqua's *Venus*. The latter is full of strength, passion, and energy ; while the former has an effect of hurrying forward throughout its whole length, which produces a curious illusion towards the end of the piece : the final section is the same as the first ; yet, when it is reached, so animating is the influence of the middle section that, without any alteration of the tempo-lever, the music seems suddenly to leap into an increase of time, almost as though the weight of what had gone before were rushing it to its close.

With this work (*De Primera*) and *El Tolero*, with *El Choclo* and *La Sucursal*, the reader may regard himself as possessing good examples of the best tango dance pieces. If a fifth example is wanted of a more popular class, the robust *Max Linder* of Duque and Costa will be found interesting enough to repay purchase.

Roughly graded, without reference to any individual qualities except those of "player-pianism," the following dozen tangos may be taken to represent the rise from elementary (a) through intermediate (b) up to advanced (c) :—

- (a) *Tocalo mas fuerte, Sequi que te Asienta, La Sucursal, Quasi Nada, El Caburé ;*
- (b) *Independencia, El Choclo, La Payada, De Pura Cepa ;*
- (c) *El Tolero, Armenonville, De Primera, and Venus.*

SYDNEY GREW.

## CHILDREN'S MUSIC.

### VIII.

PURCELL was born in 1658, two years before Charles the Second came back to improve life and living in this country (please remember that that is sarcasm), and died in 1695, when he was only thirty-seven years old. He wrote a vast quantity of music, and in many ways is the greatest English musician. All you are concerned with, however, is his Golden Sonata in F major, and three or four short harpsichord pieces. The editions that I myself am acquainted with are the Orchestrelle Company's rolls 64083, 60507, and 64383.

Purcell wrote his first sonatas in 1683, two years before the poor, foolish Duke of Monmouth's rebellion, and when he himself was twenty-five years old. The Golden Sonata is a late work, however, and was not published until after his death. The shorter pieces belong to 1689, the years of the great Revolution. This music belongs, therefore, to stirring times. It represents England at her best. It is also great music, though far less great than that of Bach and Beethoven.

The simplest plan on which these old-time sonatas were constructed is this: the composition was divided into two halves (first half and second half), and each half was again divided into a slow portion and a quicker portion. The slow portion always came first.

The chief difference between the two halves of the work lay in the faster portions. The faster portion of the first half was serious, and a little intellectual in style (often it was a "fugue"); that of the second half was lively in spirit and very clear in style (not infrequently it was a dance of a gigue-like nature). The first quick section was always in duple time, the second in triple.

Therefore the progression of a 17th-century sonata was from grave to gay, a progression which Purcell maintains here in the Golden Sonata, with the reservation that his gravity is nobly happy and his gaiety held in check in a strong, sturdy, English-like fashion.

Purcell, however, indulges in a little extension of form in the first half of the sonata. Instead of having only *two* parts (a slow one and a faster one) he has *three* (a slow one, a still slower one in another key, and then the expected quick one). He thereby converts the first half into a work of art perfectly complete in its own standing. Just as there are two forms of rhythmical movement (duple and triple) so there are two forms of structural balance (binary and ternary). When you have heard enough music to begin to take an intelligent interest in its form, you will find that these two forms of structural balance are in perpetual conflict, but that the binary always wins. The perfect Beethoven sonata is in two movements or four movements, never in three, and the perfect Bach fugue always divides into two halves. Ternary form is primitive. It is used mostly in early music (like Haydn's sonatas), or conventional music (like Handel's operatic arias). But though it is primitive, it is none the less capable of perfection. Purcell here, in the first half of his Golden Sonata, gives us an example of developed ternary (*i.e.*, three-part) form of the highest possible order.

Therefore, when you play this music, you have to square your shoulders for two efforts, one to carry you over three movements, and another to carry you over two.

The opening portion is a *largo*, very rich, very noble, very strong. It begins on the first beat of the bar ( $\frac{4}{4}$  time : the second bar commences on the 6th note of the bass, and the third bar on the 16th note). The music is made up (1) of a flowing tune which reminds us of the melody of that



fine old song, "The Vicar of Bray," and (2) of some square chords of accompaniment. If you will learn the melody carefully up to the opening of the 4th bar, you will find the rest of the music quite easy to follow. The close must be grandly powerful.

The middle portion of this first half is an *adagio*. The key is F minor. The spirit of this part of the sonata is of the purest pathos. The music is strong, and remarkably assured (I mean *confident*), but it is still very sad. We need this sort of sadness, however, for it is the sort that gives us courage. You will find a good deal of it in Bach and Beethoven and Brahms, and in the American poet, Walt Whitman (can I recommend even you children to read Whitman's *President Lincoln*? I think I can. Anyway, I do! That long poem of Whitman's will help you to understand how musicians express sorrow). The music for this middle portion is in  $\frac{3}{2}$  time (the first bar commences on the third perforation, the second bar on the fifth), but it really swells along in deep waves of sound that make you regard the rhythmical movement as being only "one" in a bar. . . . I most anxiously hope you will understand these thirty-one bars. If you do understand them, you may be sure that you are real little musicians.

The third portion is a serenely joyous piece of music. It reminds me personally of a happy man on a perfect day in the late autumn. If your roll is well marked in the matter of loud and soft contrasts, you can let your player play this portion of the sonata of its own accord. If your roll is *not* well marked, you had better give the piece up, for Purcell wants some abrupt echo effects here and there which are vitally necessary, and which you can only discover from the marking of the music-roll. The time is  $\frac{4}{4}$ , and the first complete bar begins on the 10th note, the second complete bar on the 18th, and the third complete bar on the 27th. The

final cadence of this (the *allegro*) portion is the close to the first half of the sonata. You must make it big, massive, and sustained.

The second half is in two parts—an introductory *grave* in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time and a delightfully crisp *allegro* in  $\frac{3}{8}$  time. The *grave* is in D minor, the *allegro* in F major. The former is very “intimate” in character. It will provide you with more opportunity for soulful playing than any other part of the sonata. The latter rustles and flutters delicately like a dancing spring breeze. If you don’t interfere with it overmuch, it will come out exactly as Purcell intended it to. Each of these final portions commences on the first beat of their opening bars.

There are eight short Purcell pieces ready for young player-pianists. Two of these (the *Cebell* and the *New Irish Tune*) are delightful. Of the rest, the two Preludes are strong, though very simple after the Golden Sonata; the Minuet is dainty, and the second Allemande is graceful; but the first Allemande and the Siciliano are old-fashioned, and are best left alone except by *very* earnest and enquiring youngsters. The *Cebell* is a “trumpet tune.” The *New Irish Tune* is the famous *Lillibullero*, arranged by Purcell for harpsichord solo, just as Percy Grainger to-day is arranging old popular songs for pianoforte solo.

I had better tell you something about *Lillibullero*. Somewhere about 1688, when the English people were getting ready to send King James the Second about his own business, a poet named Wharton wrote some seditious verses to an old nursery tune, and gave them to the people to sing. In less than a month, this silly song (for the verses were the poorest doggerel) had gone all over the kingdom, and everybody was singing it. It linked all classes together—high and low, rich and poor, one with another, as the psalm

says—and there is no doubt it had much to do in the speedy bringing about of the great Revolution that made William of Orange King of England. Purcell wrote his harpsichord version in 1689. He gives us the tune three times, first in the treble, secondly in the bass, and thirdly in the treble again, but this time a little varied. When you play this piece of music, think what a fine and glorious state England was in in 1689, and how wonderfully appropriate to the spirit of the age was this simple old tune. And to convince yourselves that popular sentiment and wonderful reforms do not require great intellectuality to work them up to a height of passionate daring (that's a clumsy, grown-up sort of clause, but you know what I mean), learn now the refrain of the 1689 song—"Lillibullero bullen a la !"



## BARRED MUSIC-ROLLS.

FEW thorough-going player-pianists have failed to deplore at one time or another the absence of "barred" music-rolls. Even the most intelligent find themselves nonplussed occasionally, for rhythmic complexity (a dominant feature in most advanced or elaborate music) can be unravelled with certainty only when the performer is aware of the normal metrical structure of the passage containing it.

Without bar-lines no one can be sure that he has—in strange or difficult passages—rightly apprehended that normal structure.

The question of rhythmical intelligence is deeper and more general than would appear at first glance. It concerns all executive musicians. Many persons of high musical gifts, though sensitive in themselves to the beauties of rhythm, and though responsive to its illimitable varieties, cannot with their own hands control certain rhythmical effects. In Schumann's pianoforte concerto, for instance, is a famous passage which has caused many a breakdown, though when safely negotiated it comes out to the hearer with a strangely graceful ease; and in Brahms's "Song of Destiny" is a similar passage which often disconcerts the conductor. (With regard to the latter, the visitors at the choral rehearsals of an English Triennial Festival a few years ago used to note that the chorus-master invariably lost his beat in this passage of the Brahms cantata, and scrambled about in an ungainly fashion, while the chorus, borne along by their firm sense of the normal rhythm underlying the passage, passed onwards with ease and safety.)

Various modern systems have come to life to cope with these difficulties. It is universally recognised that as rhythm forms the basis of music, so an apprehension of rhythm must form the basis of musical study.

Musical instruction in the past has almost ignored rhythm. The present writer (apparently owing to the brevity of his lessons) passed through three or four years of comprehensive work without once (so far as his recollection goes) hearing even the word used. Few children can be taught to apprehend rhythm while confused with the technical difficulties of piano-forte- or violin-playing. The neglect of the matter is therefore explainable, though not to be justified.

Nowadays children are taught to feel and observe rhythm by means of dances and carefully graded calisthenics. A hundred years hence the complexities of Schumann and Brahms may have dissipated themselves for the average musician. At present, however, they remain to give us pause. As the player-piano has no disturbing elementary technicalities, and as it belongs mostly to the world of adults, it should be forced to eliminate from its music all such difficulties as depend upon ignorance or insufficient supply. Without any doubt, the music-roll is insufficient which does not mark the bar-lines ; and so player-pianists, in order to secure the best value out of their instrument, should insist upon a few rolls at least being provided with bar-lines for their intelligent study.

The "Piano-Player Review" from time to time raises the question of barred music-rolls. It would be well if readers supported the agitation, for it is only by loud and long complaints that wrongs in the economic and political worlds are righted. If manufacturers thoroughly understand that a large body of people desire their music-rolls to be as complete as is possible, they will see to it that the rolls are so provided. The "Review" obviously cannot carry on the plea unaided.

S. G.

## THE STUDENTS' PAGE.

## VII.

II.—SONATA IN E<sup>b</sup> FLAT, *Schubert* (continued).

THE slow movement is one of those passages of music which insist upon your yielding yourself up to them completely. It is not apparently an over-original piece; yet you find at once that you can only listen to it or perform it in a mood of entire absorption. This piece of music must pass along its way to the exclusion of all other things. If it does not, it is as good as nothing. It calls for individuality in the player to a greater degree than do the other movements of the sonata. Its meaning and beauty are not self-evident. They have to be brought out. As the second subject is orchestral in style, the player-pianist must use all the artistic resources of his instrument to keep the music there from sounding abrupt or "choppy" or even positively ugly.

It is important to note that the section commencing at bar 27 (i.e., at the 14th bar after the momentary pause indicated  $\frown$  on the roll) consists of a series of short full chords *forte*, interspersed with melodic pendants *piano*, and not of a uniformly loud passage, as is implied by the marking of all the various rolls the present writer has observed.

For the rest, the student must be left to work out for himself the character and style of the music, since the *andante molto* is such that it is difficult to say more than that the rhythm is duple and the structure simple two-part.

## III.

The third movement is an unelaborated example of the classical Minuet-and-Trio. It displays probably the simplest treatment of this form that we can find among the music of the early 19th century.

But though pre-Beethovenian in *form*, it is not so in *spirit*. The serenity of its mood is intimate and lyrical, not impersonal or (as it were) instrumental. And while it eludes the atmosphere of the dance, it also avoids the dramatic forcefulness of the scherzo. If it were to be played upon any other instrument than the pianoforte, the string-quartet would offer the best means of transposition; for while the opening phrase is partly vocal, the continuation is a delicately springing melody that seems to ask for the clear tone of the solo-violin.

The student, therefore, may convert the movement into a study for refined and expressive playing. Rhythmically, the music moves along in swelling pulsations which would induce an orchestral conductor to mark the beats once only in a bar; and so the player-pianist



should enrich the tone of the chords upon the accents by a pressure on the pedals combining with a simultaneous movement of the sustaining-lever. In the matter of melody, the tune referred to above as asking for the solo-violin passes at times into the tenor register, and so, for the purpose of separating the tune from the accompaniment, he should at the same time make use of the melody-buttons or levers.

There are a number of suddenly contrasting *pianos* and *fortes*, also a few *sforzato* chords, which may tempt the performer to employ the accenting-device of his instrument; but all that is required can best be done upon open pedalling *plus* the artistic use of the sustaining-lever.

The sentences in the Minuet are regular—(a) a twelve-bar sentence, repeated; and (b) a twenty-four bar sentence, repeated, of which the second twelve are the same as (a) except for the modulation which closes the opening sentence. The sentences in the Trio are equally regular—(c) a ten-bar sentence, repeated; and (d) a twenty-bar sentence, repeated, of which the second ten are again the same as (c). After the Trio, the Minuet is played again, with repeats.

The office of this movement is to provide a calm, restful interlude between the Andante and the Finale.\*

#### IV.

The Finale is not an impassioned or even a vigorous piece of music. It is light and animated, moving in a buoyant, rippling fashion to its climax and thence to its close, where it flutters away into silence as a bird drops out of sight. The sincerely lyrical spirit of the Minuet continues here, as does the avoidance of any Beethovenian dramaticism; though for all its ease and spontaneity the music is strong enough.

It is a true sonata finale—that is to say, it is a pure continuation and a compact rounding-off of what has gone before.

The pianoforte score contains many marks of expression that ought to be printed on the perforated roll. These are as legitimate and as unstudied, however, as the music itself, and the performer who gets to understand the music properly will find himself observing them unconsciously.

The rhythmic movement of the piece is duple, and its form is a modern outgrowth of the Minuet-and-Trio (without, of course, the characteristic repeats of the Minuet-and-Trio).

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\* Readers in search of a simple piece suitable for testing the light-spring theories of Mr. Frederick H. Evans, should experiment with this Minuet of Schubert's.

The middle part of the Finale (the equivalent of the Trio) contains the waltz-like melody which—as was remarked here last month—shows the ancestry of some of the waltz-tunes in Strauss's "Rosebearer."

This middle section contains the big central climax of the Finale; but the performer must remember that the central climax is only comparatively big: it does not call for any harsh enforcing of the tone or for any agitated treatment of the tempo. Moreover, the central climax is not the climax of the movement. The greatest volume of tone must be reserved for the sudden expansion which, coming between the first and second subjects in the "recapitulatory" section of the Finale, forms not only the climax of the present movement, but also the climax of the whole sonata. This important point occurs at the 25th bar after the return of the theme which opened the Finale (or, in other words, at the 10th bar after the decorative trills which occur here in the treble register of the pianoforte).

The Finale calls for skilful playing; but it is so beautiful that if the performer yields himself up to its influence he will find it teaching him what to do.

The first four bars of the Finale are a little troublesome. It would puzzle even a trained musician to say off-hand what was the rhythm of the music or what were its metrically accented notes, and few player-pianists could rightly accentuate the passage without knowledge of the music from the fifth bar onwards.\*

These opening bars are troublesome for two reasons: first, that the initial note is a decorated sixth-quaver of a bar (there are the equivalent of six quavers in each bar, set out in two groups, each of the value of three quavers), and, secondly, that the first quaver-division of bars 2 and 4 is occupied by a silent rest.

From bar 5 onwards all is plain sailing, and as soon as we know the predominant movement of the music, bars 1-4 also become perfectly intelligible.

In order to mark off the metrical divisions of the opening phrase, draw bar-lines across the roll as follows:—(1) after the 3rd perforation and before the 4th; (2) immediately after the 8th; (3) between the 13th and 14th, counting from the right-hand side of the roll (the 14th note is a single note standing by itself in the middle of the roll); (4) immediately after the 18th perforation; and (5) between the 24th and the 25th (the 24th is a short little note standing by itself in the middle of the roll, and the 25th is the first long note of the graceful melody that begins in the fifth bar).

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\* We have here an instance of the absolute necessity for the "barring" of music-rolls.

The Student who is anxious to assimilate thoroughly the symphonic relationship of the entire sonata will perhaps be well advised to master the first, third and fourth movements before concentrating upon the second, because, as the latter is the deepest and the most significant, it can best be apprehended by the preliminary understanding of what, in the end, depends completely upon it for artistic justification. Of all the classical pianoforte sonatas, this present work of Schubert's seems the simplest and clearest, and the best for general use in quarters where acquaintance with the classics is limited.

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THE STUDENTS' PAGE is a department of the "Piano-Player Review" established for the use of serious player-pianists. The main features of player-piano technique will be expounded month by month, and technical and æsthetic difficulties solved for correspondents. . . . .

Readers are asked to bear in mind that "serious" player-pianists are not of necessity students of advanced music, and that (in accordance with the "Editorial" in our fifth issue) we are anxious to stimulate imagination and increase knowledge, even in most rudimentary directions.



## MUSIC NOTES AND NEWS.

AN EXTRACT FROM "A TECHNICAL TREATISE ON PIANO-PLAYER MECHANISM."

By WM. B. WHITE, LYMAN BILL, NEW YORK.

"Let it also be said that artistic performance of music through the medium of the player, although quite possible, requires hard work and loving care.

"One must study a piece with as much attention as if one were learning the notes for hand-playing. One must seek for the true interpretation in every phrase, aye, in every tone. One must play it over and over until every separate measure is familiar.

"Most of all, one must have striven to see into the composer's mind, and to penetrate his intentions and meaning. Only thus can artistic results be achieved. Yet the task is not so hard as would appear from this description of it. A few months' care and attention, backed up by natural taste, will enable one to produce remarkable results; especially if backed up by a good piano-player or player-piano." . . .  
"Study every measure with loving care. Then use freely your own knowledge, intellect, emotion. Do all these things and you will not operate; **you will play.**"

\* \* \* \*

The following is the programme of music given at a demonstration of the "Pistonola" by Messrs. Boyd Ltd., of 167, High Road, Ilford, Essex, at the Ilford Town Hall, November 26th:—Pistonola Solo, Sonata in D Minor, Dale: Mr. Stanley E. Harris. Song, "The Lost Chord," Sullivan: Mr. Harry Thornton (Accompanied on the Pistonola). Song, "Where my Caravan has rested," Lohr: Miss Marjorie Muir (Accompanied on the Pistonola). Song, Selected: Mr. John Roberts (Accompanied on the Pistonola). Pistonola Solo, Valse, Op. 34, No. 1, Moszkowski: Mr. Stanley E. Harris. Pistonola Solos (a) Danse Caprice, Op. 46, Grünfeld; (b) Impromptu, Hambourg: Mr. Stanley E. Harris. Song, "Angels Guard Thee," Godard: Miss Marjorie Muir (Accompanied on the Pistonola, with Flute Obligato). Song, "Come into the Garden, Maud," Balfe: Mr. John Roberts (Accompanied on the Pistonola). Song, "Maire, My Girl," Aitken: Mr. Harry Thornton (Accompanied on the Pistonola). Pistonola Solo, Fantaisie, Op. 49, F. Minor, Chopin: Mr. Stanley E. Harris.

## THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

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There have also been Pianola recitals at Huddersfield, Nottingham, Liverpool, Warrington, Wolverhampton, Bradford, and Stafford.

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The Perforated Music Company has begun a "Riddle-Roll" Competition that should prove both amusing and instructive. A prize of a year's free library subscription is offered to the successful competitors. There is also a "Popular-Puzzle-Roll," for the purposes of a home competition. All particulars may be had from the Perforated Music Co., Ltd., 197/203, City Road, London, E.C.

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### MACHINE MUSIC.

#### ORCHESTRELLE COMPANY RESULTS.

The first annual meeting of the Orchestrelle Company just held directs attention to a branch of enterprise which has only a comparatively small representation in the ranks of joint stock companies. There can be little doubt that the invention of the mechanical piano-player, of which the "pianola" is a well-known type, has brought a considerable accession of business to the piano trade. There are now many concerns in the field designed to fill the needs of those who require instruments to be played by music-rolls as well as by hand. Nearly every maker of repute has added the supply of these adjuncts to the older trade of piano-forte manufacture. Statistics are not easy to obtain, but it is estimated by competent judges that at least 100,000 pianola or other players have been supplied by London houses during the past few years.

An index to the progressive character of the trade generally may be gathered from this first report of the Orchestrelle Company, which is a holding company deriving its income from dividends in companies established in this country and on the Continent, and which transact an international trade. These undertakings include the old Orchestrelle Company, the Choralion Company of Berlin, the Æolian Company of London, the Steck Piano Company of Gotha, the French Æolian Company, the Universal Music Company of Hayes, Middlesex, and C. Milsom & Son, of Bath, Bristol, and Swindon. The net profits of these undertakings were stated to have increased during the five years ended June 30th, 1911, from £36,172 to £59,295 in the last year of the series, the average of these certified profits being, therefore, £45,000. For the year 1912 the net profits of the affiliated companies are stated to have amounted

to £67,611. The amount shown as net profit for the year ended 30th last is £79,903, an increase of £12,292. This satisfactory result has been achieved after writing off an amount of £18,537 for depreciation, being over £5,000 more was than allocated on this account in the previous year.

PROFITS DEALT WITH PRUDENTLY.

The way in which these profits are proposed to be dealt with indicates a conservative financial policy. The issued capital of the Orchestrelle Company consists of £400,000 in Ordinary shares and £250,000 in Six per cent. Preference shares. The amount received by the company in dividends on its holdings is £33,804, but it would obviously have been easy to have paid a larger proportion of the profits of the affiliated companies as dividend to the holding company. An Ordinary dividend, at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, has been already paid and absorbed £20,000, which, added to the Preference dividend, raises the amount distributed to £32,888. There will, therefore, be no further dividend on the Ordinary shares, but out of the balance of the profit made by the affiliated concerns a sum of £45,200 is carried forward to surplus account, raising the surplus to a total of £162,772, after writing off the whole of the preliminary expenses, which amounted to £23,651. This surplus is invested in the business.

The report is accompanied by an amalgamated statement of the assets and liabilities of the Orchestrelle Company and of the separate undertakings which it owns, and by a balance-sheet and profit and loss account of the new Orchestrelle Company. The principal items on the asset side of the amalgamated statement are the stock of instruments for music which, taken at or under cost, amount to £235,717, and sundry debtors £311,275. In the balance-sheet of the Orchestrelle Company itself is an item of £214,850, which is made up of advances to subsidiary and allied companies, and represents that portion of the amount raised by the issue of Preference shares which has been invested in the various businesses.

The financial position appears to be a strong one. It should be noted that when the prospectus was issued last year only the Preference shares were offered to the public, the whole of the Ordinary shares being taken by the vendors as purchase consideration. On the results now submitted the Preference interest appears to be well secured, and in addition there is a guarantee for both principal and interest attached to these shares, the guarantors being the Æolian Weber Piano and Pianola Company of New York. The net profits for the past financial year of that company were £171,603.—“THE TIMES,” Dec. 11th.



### PIANO-PLAYER COMPANY'S FAILURE.

Meetings of the creditors and shareholders of the New Trist Piano-Player, Ltd., 34, Gresham Street, E.C., were held yesterday at the Board of Trade Offices, Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, W.C., when accounts were submitted showing liabilities of £1,367, against assets valued at £2,182, but a deficiency of £28,184 as regards contributories.

The Official Receiver reported that the company was formed in December, 1911, with a nominal capital of £40,000, to acquire from the liquidator of the "Trist Piano-Player, Ltd.," the goodwill, patents, and certain other assets of that company, which had a factory at St. Alban's. The purchase price was £27,000, payable as to £24,000 in shares and the balance in cash. The directors included the Earl of Plymouth (resigned 13th June, 1913), Sir Ernest Clarke (resigned 5th March, 1913), Count Alexis de Topor, Mr. M. M. Kastnar, Mr. A. R. Trist and Mr. H. O. Crowther (resigned 14th August, 1913). No prospectus was issued, but in addition to the 24,000 fully paid Vendors' shares 8,000 Preferred Ordinary shares were subscribed for by friends of the directors. These have been called up and paid to the extent of 12s. 6d. per share and there is thus a balance of 7s. 6d. per share, or £3,000, uncalled capital which is available in the liquidation. The failure of the company is attributed by Mr. Trist to the inability of the directors to agree as to the methods on which the company's business should be conducted.

The liquidation was left in the hands of the Official Receiver and a committee of inspection.—"FINANCIAL TIMES," December 3rd.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TINKER (TWICKENHAM). If the melody "comes out" when it lies in the treble, and not when it is covered by the bass part—it would appear that the right-hand accent-slot in the tracker-bar is choked up, or, at any rate, the valve is not working. Stop the roll so that the slot is uncovered by a perforation in the paper, and then use a pump the while you use the treadles to create a vacuum. If the valve does not clear, it will be necessary to take it out and adjust it.

H. K. (HULL). Your letter scarce calls for a reply after telling you last month in these pages that we cannot make comparisons. Perhaps most keen users of the player have very strong opinions as to the comparative merits of some players. Certainly the writer has, but—"when doctors disagree—!" In addition to this reason for not advising our readers, there are other reasons; obvious reasons for continuing the policy of strict neutrality. Would you, if you had spent, say, £150 on a player, like to be told that it was not nearly so good as one of another make? Would you not pitch this journal on to the fire, and thereby cut yourself off from all other kinds of help and interest that the "P.P.R." supplies. That experts can claim in all sincerity the premier position for diverse instruments, see correspondence in near back numbers between J. H. Morrison and Owner!!!

The foregoing reply will partly answer your query. We cannot advise readers what to purchase, nor whom to employ for repairs and adjustments. Surely the best man to go to is the maker or chief agent for your particular make of player. Supposing that your instrument is by a maker unknown in this country, we safely advise you to approach any firm advertising in this journal.

VOCAL (BLETCHLEY). The only guide to accompaniments by player that we know of is to be found in the early numbers of this journal, "How to Accompany." See also occasional replies to correspondents ("A. M.," Nottingham, December, and "Tenor," same number).

R. R. (CAMBRIDGE). The words "full compass" denote, or should denote, in a piano 85 or 88 notes, and lead one to suppose that the same applies when used to describe the player. "Full scale 88 note" is, however, the usual formula.

BEN (MANCHESTER). If your lever won't remain at "play" the trouble is probably caused by a loose screw or bearing which forms the pivot on which the connecting rod works. Take out the case-work of piano and trace the movement until you come to the loose bearing—then tighten till the lever holds.

- S. W. H. (WARRINGTON). Do not blame yourself. The old player which you describe is quite unfitted for playing such music as you want to use. You really should get a modern player-piano of some kind: the best that you can purchase. Your evident love of good music should be sufficient warranty for us to advise you to rely entirely on your own judgment when purchasing. Take the same roll for test on each instrument that you go to hear and try. See also "How to purchase," "P.P.R.," Vol. II., No. 1.
- BUYER (WATFORD). See reply above, "H. K." (Hull); but we think you are asking too much for your old player. Be careful that you do not approach the business with the same purely commercial reasoning as one would perhaps need in buying bricks. Discounts have little relation to musical value; what relation there is is generally in inverse ratio!!
- PAPYRUS (DURHAM). Your query is perfectly answered by the following extract from the "P.P.R.," December, 1912, Vol. I., No. 3:—"A COPYRIGHT WARNING. The Secretary of the Mechanical Copyright Licences Co., Ltd., 27, Regent Street, London, S.W., has written as follows:—'The articles appearing in your "Review" by Mr. J. H. Morrison on the making of music-rolls has been read by me with great interest; might I, however, ask you to kindly draw your readers' attention to a very important fact, and that is that the making of these music-rolls is an infringement of copyright, unless the proper notice is given to the owner of the copyright of their intention to make the record and pay the necessary royalty. Without giving such a warning to your readers they might take it for granted that they had full liberty to make records of any musical work without liability, but they have not this power any more than of making a manuscript copy in the ordinary notation.'"
- CELLO (BIRKENHEAD).—We are unable to compile a list of accompaniments for the cello. Write to the chief music-roll firms for complete up-to-date catalogues, and they will be sent free of charge—You can then look for what you require. Yes, there is a growing demand for accompaniments, but the supply seems tardy, and where a dozen musical people want good accompaniments, two dozen people want new rolls that are for ordinary use.
- W. A. (CHELSEA).—Chelsea!! and in doubt as to what good modern music to get? We commend to your notice any rolls of music by the following composers: Debussy, Ravel, Schoenberg, Reger, Liapounow, Scriabine, Balakirew, Elgar, Bantock, Cyril Scott, Benjamin Dale.



BEGINNER.—The DEGREE of accent is not automatic. The operator controls the tone value and the time value of each note or phrase. Think this over, and you will realise the enormous field for good or bad playing.

ORGANIST (SURREY).—Bach G minor, A minor, Chromatic D minor, are available. The A minor has side perforations for inner parts, subjects, etc.

PERSISTENT (YORK).—When playing is done on a light pressure, the motor should NOT decrease speed; or, to put it in another way, by the time you have enough pressure to get a safe and clear pianissimo, your motor should be working at normal speed, beyond which no extra pressure can cause it to vary.

X. (READING).—Loss of grip denotes incomplete vacuum. If no escape can be detected in the tubing and joints, the weakness is in the valve seats, which will need cleaning and regulating. Make sure that the motor has no holes in the material of which the bellows part is made.

TYKE (SHEFFIELD).—The uneven running of the motor can probably be cured as follows: Take off the five motor slides. Place a piece of Oakey's No. 0 sand- or glass-paper on a piece of glass (flat). Rub down the slides till perfectly even surface is attained, then polish with blacklead (dry), and replace. If this does not make good, then the surface of the motor must be treated in the same way.

SISTER H.—Stools WILL sometimes slide backwards. To remedy, get two rubber buttons and put one on each back leg of the stool. This is generally sufficient for a carpeted floor, but if the floor is polished wood you must drive in two small nails, file off the heads of them, and the remaining spikes will keep the stool firm and have a marked effect upon the floor.

KITTY (CORK).—We are pleased to hear that our suggested programme caused some measure of your success. You HAVE progressed since you first wrote to these pages. A Happy New Year to you, and more power to your pedalling.

AMUSED (HIGHBURY).—Sir, you do me an injury. When I tried to explain the meaning of "ola" last month, I was not suffering from the effects of alcohol because I quoted the suffix. However, I plead that I was perhaps suffering from the want of it—at that moment!!

MOTHER (HASTINGS).—From the catalogues there appear to be few Xmas carols cut for the player. We can only agree with you that there are very few. We know of no others.

S. H. (BRIXTON), Box (BELFAST), COLONIAL F. M., Miss B. W.—See answer to H. K. above.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

[*N.B.—The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the views expressed by Correspondents.*]

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

SIR,—Mr. Easthope Martin astonishes me considerably. I am one of your readers who happens to know exactly Mr. Martin's ability with the piano-player. Seeking for the psychological reason of his attitude, it seems to me that he is jealous of himself, of his own attainments as a pianist, which are entirely overshadowed by his success as a player-pianist. It must be rather horrible to look back on years of labour and perseverance in which one has acquired a measure of pianoforte playing technique that is considerable even in this age of prodigies, and to find another person, who can only with danger of being hissed, attempt to play a Beethoven sonata, performing through the medium of a piano-player extremely difficult music in a highly satisfactory way.

Mr. Martin says : "In my opinion the piano-player was never intended to use up the privileges of the concert platform except for the purposes of FREE admission!! Privileges!! guineas! does he mean? or does Mr. Martin mean the privilege of the pulpit where a man is safe and secure in hammering away anything at his willing or unwilling listeners? Some of the Liszt that I have sat out, aye, and Bach too, from the fingers of the great ones made me long to hear it on a first-class player in the hands of a musician (call him operator or artist).

Mr. Martin surely is confused in bracketing the interpretative musician with the painter as producing a work of art which is such by reason of its being an absolutely human product.

The two arts are separate and distinct, and are parallel with the playwright and the actor.

An interpretative musician stands in the same category as the actor. The painter creates, as does the composer.

If Mr. Martin allows that interpretation of a work of (musical) art is a good enough qualification for a man to earn the title of Artist, say, for instance, the conductor's art, then I claim that interpretation through the medium of a piano-player can become the work of an artist, and I should call Mr. Martin's player-work as much his own art, as I should his playing by hand, and more so in degree as the difficulties of finger technique stood in the way of the obviously desired æsthetic effects.

The musical difference resulting between a piano-player of the ordinary kind, with ordinary rolls made to work by an electric motor pumping the pedals, and the finished player-piano work, say, of Mr. Martin's own excellence, is exactly the sum of the human product in the art of interpretation.

The difference between the hopeless pounder of the player and the best operator is as wide as the "artist" who bangs wrong notes at a tap-room convivial and the finest pianist of the day.

That audiences divide up into two groups—those who come to hear the music and those who come to hear and see the man—is, perhaps, correct; but for Art's sake the former group should be encouraged. Small towns cannot provide the greatest pianists, nor small purses pay long fares and prices to go to them, but a musician with a first-class player could command hearing fees from a perfectly willing (to pay) audience, and justly so.

My personal experience is that I prefer to play good music well by means of the roll than indifferently by hand, for the purely selfish reason of enjoyment. This may be—probably is—owing to my poor technique.

H. E.

### COMPETITION FESTIVALS.

OLTON,

December 13th, 1913.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of December you complain that Competition Festival Committees will not accept suggestions that the piano-player find a place in their schemes. You do not seem to have apprehended the real reason for this attitude. Yet the reason is not far to seek. It is a very simple one. *No adjudicator will venture to award marks solely upon the artistic merits of a musical performance.* It is technique that adjudicators consider. Artistic merit comes into consideration, but only to a small degree—about 10 per cent. of the whole. Therefore, as the piano-player is without a cut-and-dried technique, and so without cut-and-dried rules for judging its manipulation, adjudicators fight shy of it. They are canny folk! It is safe and easy criticism to say that  $3+2-1 \times 7 \div 2$  results in 14, but not to say that the spiritual mystery of "Kubla Khan" is of greater value and significance than the ethical and moral sentiment of "The Bridge of Sighs." As things stand



at present, adjudicators have little more to do than to work out simple sums of arithmetic. A change like that you advocate would set them problems worthy the attention of an Anatole France. Men certainly advance in this world by recognising their limitations; but it is not a particularly brave spirit that does not occasionally try a shot at the moon. We should find much to respect in an adjudicator who had the courage to say, "I give you the first place because you understand the music, and you the second place because you only understand the technicalities of its performance." But no adjudicator has yet said this. Should one ever say it, we may look to him to advocate the inclusion of our instrument in Competition programmes. . . . It is strange that Competition Festivals of all folk should oppose the piano-player. Their cry is almost a parrot-cry—that they are out to educate the masses and to foster a general love of music. But are they out ONLY for this?

Yours faithfully,

CONSTANT READER.

BROOMLANDS,

BEATTOCK,

December 18th, 1913.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Easthope Martin, is determined that the term "Artist" shall never be applied to the player-pianist. "To my thinking," he says, "a work of art stands as such because it is solely and absolutely a human product, entirely due to human effort."

This statement seems to me to raise several conundrums. When is a product human? What is human effort? Without discussing the merits of the two methods of playing the piano, I am bound to say that it seems to me a little extravagant thus to drive a wedge between them, making one of them "solely and absolutely a human product" and the other nothing of the sort. It would, I think, have been easier to understand Mr. Martin if he had been contrasting singing, let us say, with piano-playing. In a sense, no doubt singing is a human product, in that it is produced without any assistance by a human being. But in a modern grand piano the artist has to deal in any case with a very complicated and elaborate instrument, and it is a little difficult to understand why the result should be a human product as long as he plays it with his hands and ceases to be so when he plays it with his feet.

As an exercise in the art of splitting hairs Mr. Martin's letter is interesting, but I cannot admit that he makes out a case.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

BERTRAM SMITH.

P.S.—With regard to the question of paying for admission to Player Recitals, it seems hardly necessary to "hold very strong views." I suppose that matter will solve itself, as in the case of any other form of entertainment, according to the rules of supply and demand.

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To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

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8th November, 1913.

THE NEW SERVANT.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

DEAR SIR,—A year ago there appeared in "The Times" (8th Nov., 1912) this advertisement of the Broadwood-Hupfeld Piano Player:—

"As the best interpreter of all the best and most inspiring works that have been given to us by the Old Masters of Music, the new instrument which we shall introduce to music-lovers on Monday next [Nov. 11th, 1912] has been hailed by those musicians who have heard it as 'The New Master.'"

For years past I had been an enthusiastic admirer of the piano-player as a musician's servant; but I marvelled to hear that any musician worthy of the name could be found to accept a single stereotyped interpretation of a work as its only possible interpretation, surrendering his right to make his own guess at the composer's intention and to try a number of variations in interpretation in his search for the best.

I thought of what Liszt has said of Chopin :—

“Chopin cessa plus tard d'ajouter cette explication [tempo rubato] à sa musique, persuadé que si on en avait l'intelligence, il était impossible de ne pas deviner cette règle d'irrégularité.”

I make no pretension to being a musician myself, but I have long been interested in studying the opinions of musicians of recognised merit ; and for me there is nothing “curious” in the experience recently described by one of your correspondents at p. 348 of the “Review” (No. 13, October, 1913).

An admitted expert player-pianist had said that he would rather play a thing badly by hand than brilliantly with the aid of his player.

Your correspondent “Curious” appears to have failed to distinguish between the pleasure derived by the performer and that afforded to the audience. I agree with him that I should consider I had got better value for my money if “good player-piano work” was given me instead of bad hand-playing. But I sympathise with the expert player-pianist when he longs to be able to transcend the limitations of his stereotyped roll, and try other interpretations that occur to him.

I have, for years past, been urging upon musicians of my acquaintance that, if they will only regard the pneumatic player as a servant and a friend, they will find it immensely useful and interesting to them ; but, of course, it has been uphill work to allay the indignation and disgust that were stirred up when Broadwood's declared a performer with a roll on a pneumatic machine to be the “best” of all possible interpreters of a musical masterpiece.

The more I become acquainted with masterpieces, through the much-valued medium of the piano-player, the more I become desirous to hear these interpreted in different ways by different experts in hand-playing, and the more I wish that I possessed a moderate facility for playing by hand myself, so that I might try the variations that occur to me, and so that I might indulge the “semi-creative temperament” that you refer to in one of your back numbers.

I think that there must be many other admirers of the piano-player who are as profoundly impressed by its limitations as I am.

Yours faithfully,

W. SHARPEY SEATON.

[EDITORIAL NOTE :—The Editor takes this opportunity to explain that this is the first communication which he has received from Mr. Seaton. Owing to a regrettable misunderstanding at the time when the present Editor was taking over the Editorship from other hands, matter was inserted as contributed by Mr. Seaton although, in fact, it had not been sent to the Editor, and was not intended for publication.]



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